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WIDENER



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BEQUEST OF

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL,

Class of 1836.

Received Nov. 14, 1891.



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LOWELL BEQUEST.

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Experimini
In utramque partem ingenium quid possit meum.
Si nunquam avaræ pretium statui arti meæ,
Et eum esse quæstum in animum induxi maximum,
Quam maxime servire vestris commodis;
Exemplum statuite in me, ut adolescentuli
Vobis placere studeant potius quam sibi.

DEDICATION TO THE PUBLIC.

Any fit excuse for publishing the following tale I know not; yet to give none, might seem to imply that, in my opinion, none is needed. I will briefly state, therefore, the best excuses that I can allege.

No one has, so far as I know, attempted to depict the simple lives of that race which is now so fast melting away before the ardour of the white man's progress in the Australian bush:—soon, none of the natural heirs of the soil will remain, and even now, their primitive mode of life is comparatively unknown to the majority of their invaders.

I would fain do honor to those artless qualities which have often been my sole social amusement when, week after week, I have sojourned in the bush, with no other companions than a faithful black, my

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dog, and my horse; and I bear willing testimony to the fidelity and cheerfulness which have sometimes made me think my sable companion a pattern worthy of imitation by many of his white and contemptuous supplanters.

Gratitude, therefore, is one motive which induces me to publish; and if I fail to give pleasure to my countrymen, they may yet perhaps, for the sake of the motive, excuse the awkwardness of the deed.

I may state also that, in accordance with the Horatian precept, this imprimatur has been deferred until the ninth year; and would not now have been ventured upon but for the following circumstance.

One of my most respected friends suggested that if the following poem were printed with colonial type, and bound in colonial material, it might fitly, perhaps, appear amongst Australian contributions to the Industrial Exhibition of 1851.

Humbly as I am disposed to think of my handiwork, I would nevertheless have adopted the above suggestion but for the loss of the only copy of Moyarra which I possessed: it had been mislaid or lost by the friend in whose care I had placed it.

This accident may be considered as producing my poem now in the character of a "Rejected Address"; and though I cannot hope that it may be as favourably received as were the celebrated "Rejected Addresses" of the witty compounders, I am tempted to assay the verdict of the public in preference to abiding by the contingency which I have narrated; especially as the friend by whom my manuscript was mislaid, was, at one time, a warm applauder of its contents.

For the truthful air of the poem I ought easily to be able to vouch: it was written, (or, rather, composed, and jotted down subsequently at intervals) when I was in daily communication with the unfortunate race of which it treats; and I now present it as originally written, rather than interfere with it in a manner which might prejudice its faithfulness as a representation.

Further, I have little to say: of those who are inclined to condemn I would entreat the kind consideration, less for myself than for my attempt: if there should be anything in it worthy of encouragement, its favorable reception may elicit from worthier hands a worthier offering to the public.

In conclusion, as I publish anonymously, if the public should trouble itself to condemn me, I shall at least escape that loss of respect, which made the Roman say,

“Eques Romanus ex Lare egressus meo,
Domum revertar minus.”

MOYARRA.

I.

In that far isle, which, long unknown,
Confesses now Britannia's throne ;
The sun, who flings his genial ray
O'er every clime from day to day,
Beheld one born to that dark race,
Who hail the woods their dwelling-place :—
The opening buds upon the trees
Were gently waving in the breeze ;
The flowerets round of every hue
Bent with full drops of morning dew ;
The feathered choir to greet the day
Poured forth their merry roundelay :
The robin with his blood-red hue,
The warbler of cerulean blue,
And all the variegated kind
That haunt the grove or ride the wind,
All—all conspired with tuneful lays
To hymn their great Creator's praise :
Nature, and nature's voice were glad,
While man—doomed man—alone was sad.

But it is past—one pilgrim more
Shall wear the chain his fathers wore ;
He too, affection's bonds shall nourish,
While yet alas ! their cause may flourish ;—
And when those links are rent in twain
He too, shall find the broken chain
Which once had cheered his happier day
Corrode his inmost heart away—

And is this all ? And do we cherish
The flower that must to-morrow perish ?
And is our earthly term so brief
Of bliss, so permanent of grief ?

Affections blighted and decaying,
 Hope, once how bright ! but still delaying,
 Where'er our wanderings, shall show
 This life, a pilgrimage of woe.

II.

Moyarra lived, a reckless child,
 And deemed, albeit a savage, wild :
 His mimic spear was early sped
 Far o'er each wondering comrade's head ;
 The eucalyptus on the hill,
 Was silent challenge to his skill :—
 Did torrents deck the mountain's side—
 Moyarra stemmed the foaming tide—
 If spies went forth to circumvent
 The neighbouring tribes on plunder bent,
 Moyarra clasped his hands in prayer,
 That he, though young, th' exploit might share.

III.

Long years have passed ; those rites ⁽¹⁾ are done,
 Which, handed down from sire to son,
 Still from that wandering people claim
 Obeisance to religion's name :—
 Their temple is the earth, air, sky,
 And through the gorgeous canopy,
 The moon, their priestess, wades in light—
 While round her path, in order bright,
 The stars, her ministers, array
 Their gleaming ranks, until the day
 Returning, chase their fires away :
 Around, in frowning grandeur, stand
 The forest patriarchs of the land ;
 In sullen sanction of the hour
 They wave beneath the West wind's power,
 Till the whole grove with yielding grace
 Murmurs around the sacred place.
 Moyarra felt his being thrill
 Within him as by magic spell ;
 Like lightning through his sanguine frame
 As the electric transport came,

In fuller tide his life-blood ran ;—
He knew—he felt himself a man.

Then by those lights which o'er him sparkled,
And by the woods which round him darkled,
By the blue arch extended o'er him,
And by the sacred rites before him,
He vowed to that dear mother earth,
Which gave his ancestry their birth,
To wage, till life's extremest close,
Unyielding warfare 'gainst her foes.
His conscious step, his haughty bearing
Bespoke a spirit proud and daring ;
The flashing of his eye confest
The courage mantling in his breast :—

The hoary warriors round him smiled
Approval of his fervour wild ;
Recounting deeds themselves had done,
Ere yet their bloom of youth had flown.

IV.

Rise, Mytah ! the graceful, and list to thy lover,
The day is declining, my toils are all over ;
Fresh spoils from the stream and the forest I bring,
And flowers wet with dew of the fragrance of spring.

As the young blade of grass to the swift kangaroo,
So dear to me, Mytah, one kind glance from you :
As the flowers love the dewdrops which nightly they
sip,
In thy smiles I would revel, and feast on thy lip.

Then haste thee thy faithful Moyarra to cheer,
With the sound of that voice which is sweet to mine
ear ;
And the name of my Mytah shall ever remain
The home of my thoughts and the theme of my strain.

Ere the song had ceased, the maiden's breast
Was throbbing with tumultuous passion,
And, at its close, she gently rose
And glided to her lover's station.
The hurried air of wild despair

That o'er her face a tremor threw ;
 The glossy orb, that would absorb
 Ere *he* the falling tear might view ;—
 In eloquent language have conveyed
 A tale of anguish and of dread :—
 And, when she oped her lips, to name
 The grief which thus had racked her frame ;
 The impatient lover madly hung
 Upon the accents of her tongue ;—
 Convulsive clenched within his hand
 More firmly his unfailing brand,
 As though the foe were now in sight,
 On whom to wreak his wrath in fight.

V.

“Moyarra ! I have trembled here
 In agony of doubt and fear—
 Mistrusting e'en thy constant heart ;
 Hear but the cause—thou wilt not start :—
 Thou knowest Muntookan (of the race
 For whom the hills are dwelling place)
 Before our gathered tribe, this morn,
 E'en now I shudder ;—he hath sworn
 That ere to-morrow's speeding rays
 Are quenched in darkness, he will seize
 Thine own loved Mytah for his bride.”⁽²⁾
 “Perish the thought !” Moyarra cried.—
 “Nay, hear my tale,” she gently said,
 “But late the tribe have onward strayed ;—
 E'en now perchance they seek for me,
 Oh, bliss ! that I have met with thee !
 I knew, I feared thy soul of flame,
 If sudden to the camp you came ;—
 I thought my o'erstrung heart would break ;—”
 “Nay, weep not, Mytah ! this is weak :
 Am *I* not here thy cause to try
 With him who thus hath dimmed thine eye ?
 Am I not here thy foes to chase
 As thus the tear from thy dear face ?—
 Methinks the caitiff I could bless,
 Who drove thee thus to my caress ;
 Who quelled for me those vain alarms

Which held thee from my longing arms."
 The dark blood mantling in her face,
 The maiden flew to his embrace ;
 Her head upon his breast reclining,
 Her swimming eyes the while declining,
 She lent his tale a willing ear,
 And sighed, assenting to his prayer.
 The night-enamoured cuckoo's call (^s)
 Aroused them from their pleasing thrall ;—
 One raptured glance around he took
 Then silence thus Moyarra broke :—
 " Such was the night and such the hour
 My country to defend I swore ;
 That oath I've sacred kept, and now
 I pledge me to a tenderer vow.
 By those all-hallowed rites I swear
 Whose mysteries not thyself mayst share,
 Whilst yet within these throbbing veins
 One feeble pulse of life remains ;
 Thee, as my dearer self to cherish,
 For thee to live, with thee to perish.

But haste thee, ere to-morrow's sun,
 My native valley must be won :
 Once there, all danger we'll defy
 To dim our hopes or cloud our joy."
 He said, and o'er the maiden threw
 A furry robe, which half concealed
 Her graceful form, and half revealed
 Its moulding and proportions due :—
 The mantle, which a gift he brought,
 From wild beasts' skins himself had wrought.
 The glimmering moonbeams faintly showed
 Where lay the dreary winding road :—
 But still his way through brake and fen,
 He followed on with watchful ken :—
 With faltering step and anxious mind
 Dark Mytah traced his steps behind.

VI.

" Brethren, full long the sun hath set,
 That brain-sick girl appears not yet ;
 If more she dallies thus—howe'er,
 The exerted voice she yet may hear."

The savage called, and a wilder cry
Ne'er thrilled upon Tartarean gloom,

Wrung from a soul in agony :—
You'd deem a voice from out the tomb
Alone could wake that echo shrill,
Responsive from the neighbouring hill.
No voice replied.—In baffled pride,
Muntookan laid him by the side
Of the embers dim, which fitful showed
The swarthy forms around that glowed.
The gaunt white stems of the trees around
Moaned in the breeze with solemn sound :
The hoarse-frog croaked in dismal tune,
From the weedy shore of the near lagoon :
The mournful note of the cuckoo seemed
To wail a crime yet unredeemed,
As nightly here, exiled from home,
The ghost of the spring-bird wept its doom :
The hungered dog in the distant dell,
Discordant howled with painful yell :—
But darker than surrounding shade,
Than the gloomy sounds by night conveyed,
The mingled tide, of wrath and pride,
That raged within Muntookan's breast.
“ So lightly prized !—my love despised !—
And who to me preferred ?—twere best
He shun my path—the rifle bird ⁽⁴⁾
To whom the serpent glides unheard,
Not surer rues the fatal spring,
When vainly flaps its struggling wing,
Than he shall rue the luckless hour
He trifled with Muntookan's power.
If curse availeth, mine shall cling
Worse than the soul's imagining.
Ye powers ! who rule the midnight air ⁽⁵⁾
Fell spirits ! hear and grant my prayer !
His be the seared and lifeless heart,
Just skilled to view its joys depart,
But sunk in hopelessness to save
Its dearest blossom from the grave ;
Till nerveless, sapless as the oak
Scathed by the livid lightning stroke,

Fostering the canker which destroys,
His heart's core wither ere he dies."

VII.

Ere yet the day's returning beam
Had crimson tinged the distant hill,
Or glancing on the bubbling stream,
Lent joyous lustre to its rill,
The chieftain rose, and, gloomy, strode
Through the twilight grey his lonely road :
Morn came :—around their watchfires mustered
The warrior chiefs—the children clustered
In playful groups—in mimic war,
To combat some their brethren dare :—
Quick wielded by the dexterous hand,
The club, a fresh-peeled myrtle wand ;
The well-poised reed a spear supplies,
While high, in rapid circle, flies
The crescent toy whose airy flight, ⁽⁶⁾
Full oft attracts the wanderer's sight :—
Rapt in the counsels of the band,
One fondly clasps his father's hand,
Each intimation of his will
Quick to receive, and to fulfil.

VIII.

The sun had set :—but, tremulously,
His rays yet gilt the western sky,
The stars with milder radiance shone,
Beset with lustre not their own,
And, faintly gleaming, seemed to mourn
The light of which their spheres were shorn :
But in the east, the azure sky
Wore purple of the deepest dye :
Save where the silver queen of night
Soothed its blue shade to tender light.
The stars in bright succession sprung
To light and life, and from them flung
That gentle influence which instils—
Its power upon the soul, and fills
(Ah ! sad but pleasing melancholy)

The heart with musings high and holy.
 Yes! this the hour in mercy given
 To wean the world-worn heart to heaven;
 In aspiration rapt sublime
 We commune with all space, all time;
 In unison with the infinite whole
 The heart accords to nature's soul,
 Of which it beats, a fervent pulse,
 That time nor danger can convulse.
 And if there be a dull alloy
 To dim the gushing of our joy,
 It is, that we must turn again,
 To smile, to weep, to herd with men
 Who, swayed by passion which they share
 With brutes by nature, day by day,
 Contented, hug their bonds of clay;
 Their sordid chains still let them wear:
 Be ours the bliss:—their punishment
 Companion with their crime is sent:
 To see, and not to feel, such joy,
 May well avenge their apathy.
 Ideal dreams of days gone by
 Illumine our night of lethargy,
 And quelling dull mortality,
 Float o'er the enraptured brain;
 When those bright spirits ranked on high,
 Whose beaming effluence gems the sky,
 A mortal penance doomed to try,
 Adorned this world of pain:
 The fame to which they dared aspire
 Shines through all time, a beacon fire,
 To light the enterprising few,
 To their celestial portion true,
 Which, in the dreariest hour can build
 Hope, all ephemeral ills to gild.
 Do patriots' laurels earn our praise?
 Through the far mist of ancient days
 Gleams a long line of Greece's martyrs
 Who perished to defend her charters:
 Their epitaph, their country's groans—
 Their fame, a world's approving tones.
 Doth wisdom claim our reverence? Ages
 Yet mourn the loss of ancient sages,

And wisdom's goddess, drooping, flies
To plume her pinions in the skies.

Bend we at Poesy's sacred shrine ?
Oh ! thou Mæonides divine !
Before whose throne the boldest falters
Ere he approach the muse's altars,
Shed but one feather of that pinion,
Which, gaining thy sublime dominion,
Gave thee to soar the upper air,
And dwell in instellation there :—
Oh ! for the faintest colour given
To tint thy page with hues of heaven !
Ah ! no ! for thee reserved alone
Thy fire, and unapproached thy throne :
Thus nature vows thy rights to guard ;—
Her earliest—her Grecian bard.

IX.

In frequent bands the tribe returning
Bore home the produce of their toil ;
And o'er their watchfires brightly burning,
Prepared for food the welcome spoil.
Then, gathering to the wild repast,
The joke and mirthful taunt flew fast ;
Not there the courtly, wreathed smile, (7)
With eye that dubious gleams the while,
And features, tutored to beguile,
The mirth, that nature felt, restrained :
Flashed many a dark and glittering eye,
Dusk faces were dissolved in joy,
And, yielding to its subtlety,
Wantoned in gladness unrestrained.

X.

The moon's chaste orb shone clear and cold ;
Each emerald blade in the grassy glade,
Sparkled with gems of nature's mould ;
The fitful shade by light clouds made,
Checking the smile the moon sent down,
And, lending the scene a transient frown,
Gave to the eye the only token
That night's mild charm might e'er be broken,

And, looking aye tranquillity,
 Partook of mutability.
 With wary glance, and noiseless tread,
 A swart form from the tall trees glided,
 A moment paused—as if in dread,
 Then to the nearest watchfire strided :
 It was Muntookan ;—brief reply
 Explained the seeming mystery ;
 “ The fugitive Mytah ” he had “ traced
 From brake to fen, from waste to waste.”
 —“ Did Mytah wander then alone ?”
 “ Alone ! no—there was with her one ;—
 Vengeance I vowed when on his path,
 And dearly he shall bide my wrath.”
 “ Who—who ? ” “ Moyarra ! ⁽⁸⁾—both I tracked ;—
 But ’tis enough—I know the fact—
 And—for the rest—my deeds shall prove
That hate most deadly sprung from love.”
 He ceased, and by the fire reclined,
 Sought in sweet sleep to soothe his mind :
 The silent chiefs around withdrew
 Their several pleasures to renew :—
 Not their’s the prompt officious zeal
 To probe the wound it cannot heal,
 Question on question hurrying
 To fan the flame that glows within :—
 By nature prompted, they restrain
 From tasking Sorrow to explain,
 And leave to Time those wounds to soothe,
 Inflicted by Care’s arrowy tooth.

XI.

Unconscious of a joy denied,
 And at the wish, each want supplied,
 Dark Mytah with the lover past
 Hours which were all too sweet to last—
 Those gentle feelings, which, alone
 Are found where Love upbuilds his throne,
 Which can to trifles light impart
 Grace unattained by measured art,
 And fill the soul with delicate sense
 Of bliss pervading and intense ;—
 Each moment ruled with grateful sway,

Hearts which but throbbed such power to obey.
 Yes! if unnamed desires to guess,
 To sooth the weary in distress,
 Each fancied evil to beguile
 With cheerful song or playful smile;
 Expected joys to antedate—
 To treasure brightest hours of fate :—
 And ever with remembrance dear
 Suppress the sigh or starting tear :
 Yes! if such life be love—'twas proved
 By Mytah and the one she loved. (9)

Aye! ye may smile, whom fickle chance
 Endows with wealth and arrogance,
 Who deem that true love doth disdain
 To quit refinement's courtly train,
 But know! Love triumphs more in such
 Harmonious response to his touch,
 Where hearts with mutual fervor beat,
 Where lips with unchecked fondness meet,
 Than, when to transient rules of art,
 Fashion would mould the struggling heart.

XII.

Nor wanted they the joys of amity :
 Koreungat claimed that social tie ;—
 Koreungat and Moyarra grew
 Alike in strength and friendship too ;
 And now, together to the field,
 They sallied forth with spear and shield :
 Together to the river went
 To rob the watery element :
 And when, encumbered with their prey,
 Homeward at eve they bent their way,
 The tones of Mytah's voice were heard,
 Caroling like a summer bird,
 As forth she bounded o'er the plain,
 And blithely hailed them home again :—
 —Then would she urge the friends to tell,
 How, or by whom their victim fell ;
 And with quick jibe and mock contempt,
 Taunt him who failed in his attempt.

Full often from the neighbouring stream
 She caught unhop'd repast for them ;

Then, spreading out her little hoard,
 Waited the coming of her lord,
 And joyed to see the fond surprise
 That glistened in his wondering eyes.

XIII.

"Koreungat! seest thou not? that light—
 That ever wont to shine so bright—
 Sure, no mischance"—upon his tongue
 With faltering tone the accents hung:—
 Hapless Moyarra! tis too true:
 The fire that nightly beamed for you,
 Trimmed by the fostering hand of love,
 No longer glimmers through the grove:
 The hands that nursed it, clasped in woe,
 Plead vainly to the insulting foe:
 The eyes that ached for thy return,
 Beneath the victor's thralldom mourn:
 The heart in which thou wert enshrined,
 Which in thine absence ever pined,
 Shrinks, languishing as a blighted flower,
 Beneath the taint of lawless power.

He staggers on—his vision swims—
 Fail in their task his struggling limbs;
 But on, with desperate energy
 He reels, the unwelcome truth to see;
 He nears the spot of past delight,
 Hence doubly charged with woe to-night;
 One glance sufficed the tale to own,
 The idol of his heart was gone;
 And *he* dejected, and alone.
 He spoke not, but his lips compressed,
 The throb convulsive of his breast—
 The expanded nostril—gathered brow,
 Shading the glittering orb below,
 Whose fiery and insatiate glow
 Seemed avaricious of a foe—
 His nervous hands' impatient grasp
 His weapon seeming now to clasp—
 All told, though now controlled his ire,
 Within it raged with fiercer fire.
 Meanwhile, at distance from his friend,
 (Not friendship now a balm could lend)

Koreungat, gloomy, turned to know
The guilty author of his woe.

The trembling women who had been
Powerless condemned to view the scene,
Yet, awed by memory of their fears,
With converse mingled frequent tears.

Two gloomy warriors from the wood,
To Mytah, fierce and sudden strode ;
Dismayed, Muntookan's form she viewed,
And fled, but swiftly they pursued :—
The rest, as clouds by winds are shattered,
As kangaroos by dogs are scattered,
For safety, tried each well-known path
Intent to shun the spoilers' wrath ;
And, fearful of Muntookan's force,
None knew, none guessed his homeward course.

XIV.

Ere yet the tale was at an end
Koreungat stood beside his friend ;—
“ Moyarra ! this a time for grief !
While Mytah's woes demand relief ?
Knowest thou Muntookan for the foe
Who claims thy bride and dooms thy woe ?
She's lost ! 'tis now thy task to prove
Moyarra worthy of her love.”

“ Full well I know my future life
A stern, I hope successful, strife :—
Yes ! o'er the vengeance of my soul
The foe, at least, has no control ;—
My ruined hopes—my blighted heart,
I owe to his malignant art.
The single passion left mature,
Shall wreak on him a reckoning sure ;
But midst the pangs, my heart that tear,
One reigns, and will not comfort hear :
I—fondly proud—in folly bold,
I—I should have this ill foretold.”

“ Nay, nay, Moyarra, say not so,
Too well his vantage took the foe :
What nightly watch, what course by day
Shall screen from us his backward way ?
Were he protected by the barrier

Of each his tribe's most chosen warrior,
Thy wrath would for the recreant doom
 That vengeance which shall surely come :
 What marvel that Muntookan, too"—

"Enough, enough—all this I know—
 But when I think upon my bride,
 But this morn clinging to my side,
 And now—alas ! in such reverse,
 When e'en *her* memory is a curse ;—
 Who could, with calm dispassionate view,
 Say, thus and thus I ought to do ?
 Go ! prate to others of relief,
 Who ne'er have known like mine a grief.
You never lost a Mytah !—no !
 You never knew like mine, a woe !
 How canst thou my bereavement tell ?
 His triumph—ha ! thou speakest well ;—
 I see, I see her at his side ;—
 Henceforward Vengeance is my bride."

XV.

Assembling at Moyarra's call,
 The dusky chiefs around him throng :
 Waiting his speech in silence all,
 As at the close of funeral song.

"Brothers ! have any heard strange sound,
 Or seen strange footprints on the ground ?"
 Each viewed askance his neighbour's face,
 As eager there some hope to trace :—
 Each eye, with self-accusing glance
 Reproached its master's negligence ;
 Not e'en the oldest chieftains spoke,
 But mournfully their grey hairs shook ;
 Reluctant then to trust the voice,
 With words that could not bid rejoice.

While all in doubt and sorrow hung,
 The youthful Warrawe 'mongst them sprung,
 (His tale reserved, till revered age ⁽¹⁰⁾
 Disclaimed its prior privilege.)

"Three travellers' tracks I viewed to-day ;
 It seemed they journeyed hence : the way
 I well remember to the spot."

Further narration needed not :

Moyarra seized a burning brand—
 Koreungat, Warrawe, all his band :
 (Though many a proffered arm was there,
 And many a heart beat high to share
 The adventure, if perchance, their aid
 Might minister to Moyarra's need.)

They reached the spot, and quickly made
 Their fire beneath the tall trees' shade ;—
 But, while his comrades sunk to rest,
 Moyarra could not calm his breast.

Ye who have seen a cultured mind
 Range wild, by no restraint confined,
 And at each thwarting of its will,
 In recklessness plunge deeper still,
 Think then what passions rent the heart
 Of one *not* schooled by rules of art :
 A child of impulse, he had been
 Till now spectator in life's scene,
 And thus to play such bitter part,
 Wrung sighs of anguish from his heart.

He sunk to sleep, but 'twas to reap
 Fresh torture from a feverish dream.
 His bark was gliding down life's stream,
 Rocked gently by the ambient tide ;—
 A guardian angel by his side,
 Seemed round an atmosphere to shed,
 Hallowing the scenes through which they sped :
 For them the varied shores of life
 With aye enduring bliss seemed rife ;
 Each hour owned hues too bright to last,
 Yet each was rival of the past.
 Alas ! he little knew, the wave
 Whose gentle dalliance rose to lave
 His bark with undulating motion,
 In joyous masque beguiled the task
 Which bore him to the restless ocean,
 Where, shuddering at the billows' roar,
 Vainly he seeks the varied shore ;
 His faithful spirit from his sight
 Fades, wrapt in shades of dubious night :
 He asks in vain the heavens o'erarched ;
 A sulphurous glare its hues hath parched,
 And vapours dim are gathering fast :

The cloud-winged thunderstorm unfurls
Its gloomy pinions to the blast :

Each lurid mass at random hurls
The lightning's intermittent light,
Whose ghastly vision quails the sight ;—
—His bark reels through the trackless foam,
Staggering beneath the wild waves' shock :—
Is there no hope to avert his doom ?

No way to shun the impending stroke ?
—The vengeful demon of the storm
Seemed now endowed with palpable form :
Like an eagle he swooped from his airy height,
The blood of his victim ran cold at the sight :
He shrunk from the breath of the sable plume,
Which o'er him was hovering, instinct with gloom,
Like ice was the chill of the deadly dews
That infected his brain with a poisonous juice,
Rendering it feeble and languishing ;
He felt the cold torpor of death's touch cling
To his quivering flesh, as each fixed clammy limb
Was numbed by the spell of that spectre dim ;
The throb of his pulse waxes faint in his heart,
Shall it cease ?—With a sudden and desperate start,
The chains of his slumber he rends asunder ;
Was that lightning a vision ? illusion that thunder ?

Calm, overhead, the clear blue sky
Replete with thousand isles of light,
Met the wild wonder of his eye,
And soothed the fever of his sight.
Lulled in repose, all nature lay
Resigned to night's benignant sway ;
But the beaded drops of terror hung
On his hot temples ; still among
His throbbing veins the curdled blood
Struggled to gain its equable flood :—
His scattered senses he recalls—
Alas ! that inward gaze appals ;—
Though bright above the stars may shine,
Dark still is all his breast within :
He woke to find the phantom of his brain
Too true an emblem of his real pain.

XVI.

While yet the day's reviving light
 Contended with the shades of night,
 Winding its radiance mid the twilight grey,
 The friends resumed their tedious way ;
 With patient gaze from print to print,
 Following the foeman as he went :
 Where, soft, the earth's retentive breast
 Preserved the footfall as imprint ;
 Elate with hope they bounded on :
 Mid rocks, with scanty moss o'ergrown,
 Erewhile they journeyed, and they curst
 The soil whose barren bosom nurst
 No fragile herb, whose wounded stem ⁽¹¹⁾
 Might claim a mutual wrong with them :
 Like greyhounds panting in the leash,
 They linger, till obtained their wish,
 The obdurate obstacle they pass,
 And wind the trail o'er the prostrate grass.
 Ha ! whither now ? with heads erected,
 Headlong they rush—the track neglected :
 And see on yonder gentle slope
 Where the forest weaves its verdant cope,
 What smoke curls faint its ashy wreath,
 Swayed by the morning's gentle breath ?
 They reach the spot :—but vain that glance,
 Vain that keen eye of vigilance—
 Around that too delusive fire
 No victims wait to glut their ire.

Blest be the forest's friendly guard,
 Waving wide shelter o'er the sward :
Here still the glistening dewdrop slept,
There rudely by the foeman swept,
 A darker hue the green turf showed,
 And marked the way the spoiler trod ;
 See ! prostrate from his recent tread
 Each blade yet strives to rear its head :
 The omen seen with keen delight,
 Inspires new vigour for the fight.

As on some mountain's shaggy crest,
 A rock for ages fixed to rest,
 (Which there a silent moral long hath stood,
 Firm mid the changeful honours of the wood,)

Now loosened from its pinnacle,
 With horrid rumour fills each dell :
 Slow creeping first, with sluggish course,
 Each bound augments its hurrying force ;
 And now, alternate, hurled on high,
 It seeks communion with the sky ;
 Now, plunging downward, ploughs the earth,
 Goring the womb that gave it birth :
 Limbs, scattered wide, its track adorn,
 Strewn 'neath their parent stems forlorn :
 Sad relics ! witness bearing long,
 Themselves how weak, their foe how strong,
 Who rolls remorseless on his way,
 While frightened echo shrieks dismay :
 So now the friends impetuous still,
 Rebuffed, not daunted in their will,
 Rush on, their vengeance to fulfil.

XVII.

On ! on ! behold the foe ! their speed
 Shames all past efforts ;—every nerve
 To straining, ministers to their need
 When most its sacrifice may serve.
 Rapid they gain : the conscious foe
 Now first his danger starts to know :
 With fiercer gesture, feller tone,
 His trembling prey he urges on :—
 She, witless of the succour nigh,
 Tasks her reluctant strength to fly.
 Now, now, Moyarra ! let your need
 Add wings to favour yet your speed.
 Yet look back, Mytah ! as a flower
 Beneath the pitiless thunderstorm,
 Droops, laden with the dropping shower,
 So yielded Mytah's fainting form :—
Her fate how different ! from her fall
 No gentle breath can bid her rise :—
 Life's sunshine never can recal
 The light of life to her dark eyes.
 Muntookan paused : and backward cast
 One glance :—a moment and 'tis past ;
 Yet in that glance, a quenchless hate,
 Lost but with life, was concentrate,

Glaring as, Gorgon-like, endowed
 To freeze the reckless gazer's blood :—
 He laughed—a laugh that fiends might use,
 Deriding man's ephemeral views :—
 One hand he wreathed in Mytah's hair—
 Whirled then the tomahawk in air—
 It glittered—sunk—a thrilling shriek—
 Its mission served too well to speak ;
 With grim delight the savage drew
 His weapon, wet with gory dew :
 Waved it, exulting, o'er his head ;
 Then through the wood's deep shelter fled.

Moyarra saw not, for his eye
 When flashed the fateful axe on high
 Convulsive closed in dizzy trance :
 Vain hope ! to dwell in ignorance.
 That thrilling cry the air that rent,
 To his prophetic heart hath sent
 The curst conviction that his fate
 Is sealed, and he now desolate.

XVIII.

In hours with bitterest anguish fraught,
 Hope courts each vision fancy-wrought,
 Each aid, though fragile as the reed
 That mocks the drowning suppliant's need ;
 Though Reason's monitory call
 May warn us from delusion's thrall,
 Hope, like the rainbow's lovely form,
 Waves its bright hues to mock the storm,
 Luring from earth our dull regard,

Like Icarus on high to soar ;
 Alas ! like his too, our reward ;—

The pleasant paths of earth no more
 To trace, in the ocean of despair
 Wailing the loss of visions fair,
 Whose fairy scenes that charmed the sight
 Rose but to whelm in deeper night
 The trusting heart that fain would think
 They wooed it from destruction's brink.
 Alas ! when sorrow's bitter cup
 The hand of fate hath lifted up,
 What mortal hand hath power to fling

The pestilent potion to the wind ?
 From Nature's stores can wisdom wring
 An antidote to soothe the mind ?
 No ! as the deadly adder's fang
 On corporal sense inflicts a pang,
 Whose rankling venom subtly glides,
 Empoisoning life's crimson tides ;
 So, when of sorrow's bitter draught
 The shuddering heart hath loathing quaffed,
 Sinks each enervate faculty,
 As paralysed beneath a spell
 Concentrate of malignity,
 Potent as if on earth th' archfiend
 Thus wrung a fealty from mankind,
 Triumphant in the petty hell
 That rends each victim's proper mind.

XIX.

"The foe 'twere folly to pursue,
 His native hills are now in view ;
 And Mytah stretched upon the plain,
 Bedews the earth with crimson stain."
 To her Moyarra madly sped,
 With faltering hand he raised her head,
 "Mytah ! my Mytah !" languidly
 Quivered the dark fringe of her eye—
 Heaved her shut lips with tremulous motion,
 'Neath gentle winds as stirs the ocean—
 In vain—her eyes no lustrous glances dart,
 No tuneful notes her trembling lips impart ;
 But for those panting sobs for breath,
 You'd deem her frame resolved in death.

Such scene was not for words ; nor now
 Grief's dalliance did the time allow ;
 The shallow streamlet's scattered spray
 Each pebble marks that checks its way :
 The unruffled river's surface hides
 The rocks o'er which its mightier current glides.
 In silent grief the warriors bare
 The unconscious object of their care :—
 Fearful to harm with reckless touch
 That form already scathed too much.
 Who ever knew of love the pain,

Till grief had bound him in its chain ?
 Oh ! 'tis grief alone that proves
 The heart that deeply, truly loves.
 In the fresh dawn of life's young spring,
 When varied joys each moment wing,
 False shapes, the parasites of the hour,
 Flit round, in impotence of power ;
 These when Hope's buoyant yearnings are
 A dower all care to drive afar,
 Their various blandishments essay
 Revelling in plenitude of sway :—
 Lo ! when the gloom of autumn's shades,
 The atmosphere of life invades
 Where flock these birds of vagrant wing ?
 Fled to adorn some recent spring,
 Their votary seeks in vain to trace
 Their path thro' viewless realms of space :
 Himself in desolation of the mind
 By all but Faith and Hope resigned :—
 Then claims his empire real love,
 Sorrow but lures him to dominion :—
 The dove hath wings, but doth the dove,
 Desert his mate to prove his pinion ?

XX.

Though social charms awhile may soothe
 To short forgetfulness of truth,
 From them the heart to solitude
 Recoils, in silent grief to brood
 O'er passions dead and pleasures fled.
 Would we could grieve their flight alone !
 Alas ! when keen-eyed Hope hath flown
 (Our herald once to realms unknown)
 When smiling Joy his station quits
 There Care in grinning mockery sits.
 Reversion sad ! at Hope's command
 'Twas bliss to image forth a brighter land,
 But, bound in Memory's fast-compelling thrall
 E'en while we loathe, the frenzying cup we drink,
 Helot-like, shuddering on the act to think,
 That conjures to our minds' distempered sight
 The melancholy ghosts of past delight,

The ruthless denizens of reflection's night ;
Night, which can make time past a settled gloom,
Past joys a curse, and Memory but their tomb :—
Alas ! in such a world where all is frail,
What let must aye be ours but to bewail ?

END OF CANTO I.

NOTES TO CANTO I.



(1) Long years have passed, those rites are done.

The ceremonies of the Australian savages have been so often, and in some respects so truly, spoken of by travellers, that I need not here detail them. Allusion to some of their principal characteristics will perhaps suffice. The scrupulous care which conceals from women and children all knowledge of the occurrences at these ceremonies cannot be overrated. The punishments due to a revelation of the mysteries is death. This statement can hardly be considered inconsistent with the fact that some white men have been initiated. The initiation invariably takes place under promise of secrecy, and the cases are so distinct that the black man does fairly and does actually look upon such a revelation, as a case unprovided for in his country's jurisprudence. I never knew an instance of a black revealing to his own class any of the mysteries which he is forbidden to speak of; and if it were not that the tribe from which I obtained my own information is now extinguished, I should perhaps be unjustifiable in alluding to them in detail. I cannot refrain from glancing at some of them. The circle, that almost universal emblem of eternity—the sinuous “line of beauty,” signalized by Hogarth—and, above all startling to the Christian observer in Australian woods, the cross—are to be found amongst the ceremonial emblems of the blacks. The footprint (one of the ancient Aztec sodiacal signs) is in request at Australian ceremonies; and the rock-crystal, once revered in parts of Europe, and now asserted there by enthusiasts to have a capacity of agency in mesmerism, is also well known to be an object of mysterious reverence amongst the simple Australian race; and, moreover, they are tolerably assured (before enlightenment amongst white men) that some of their wise men are possessed, not with devils, but with types of various animals, which dwell within these wise men or priests, and inspire them with characteristic passions. The astronomical discoveries of the race are few: all the larger lights have names amongst them, however; and by the position of the Pleiades they calculate the approach of summer very accurately. Not only, however, as regards sight, but also in sound, there is a freemasonry of acquisition on the part of the native heroes. Peculiar songs, and a peculiar call (or cooey) with its answer, and much mysterious information, are the share of the initiated. Many years ago, but after the writer had acquired information touching Australian rites, one of his aboriginal acquaintance was initiated, and returned to the usual haunts of the tribe; on returning he was surprised and delighted to find that the writer was one of the initiated, and in the exuberance of his spirits he commenced one evening to demonstrate some of his knowledge audibly enough for some neighbouring blacks to hear him; on the following morning the writer was seriously reasoned with in consequence of the indiscretion, and the young novice was taken to the bush by two of the tribe, who kept him amongst the mountains for some subsequent weeks, after which it was presumed, and truly, that he would not sing within range of forbidden ears, nor otherwise tempt with sound, any of those mysterious ceremonies of which he had become the depository. The close resemblance of observances of their rites by Australian savages, whose language is often, to appearance, totally dissimilar, is not unworthy of remark.

(2) * * * he will seize Thine own loved Mytah for his bride.

The custom which sanctions the forcible abduction of an Australian lady-love exists, but has often been misrepresented by travellers, who have not scrupled to assert that it becomes a necessary part of courtship. This is a mistake: marriages are often the result of an affiancing of many years' duration, and are peaceful and happy; nor do the lovers seem to repine at the absence of violence. On the other hand, if an Australian hero seeks a wife in a strange tribe, or if he obtain the consent of a father, and the lady decline him, he becomes forthwith a primitive Roman, and will seize his wife at any cost, however numerous the tribe which he may thus inspire with Sabine hate.

(3) The night-enamoured cuckoo's call.

The Australian cuckoo is a night-jar, and is heard only by night.

(4) * * * —the rifle bird

To whom the serpent glides unheard,

The rifle bird being shy and secluded in its habits becomes peculiarly liable to the attack of serpents, which also prefer sheltered and noisome places.

(5) Ye powers ! who rule the midnight air.

It cannot be said in Australia "*Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor*," for the religious rites of the native tribes prove that (though now their idea of a God is vague, or perhaps even that they have no such idea) they once had defined notions as to a presiding Deity. Their symbols are clearly relics of a belief which has died out in their race, and are not modern inventions among them ; their belief in malignant spirits, however, is actual at this day—but on the principle *omne ignotum pro magifico*, prevails usually in darkness, or induces them to believe that in unfathomable water some dreadful animal may abide, waiting to devour them. In connexion with their fear of spirits, they ascribe to individuals among themselves the exercise of an evil eye or influence. If a black pine away without any external injury of which the cause is known, his tribe almost invariably ascribe his death to the secret and supernatural power of some hostile black : and there are few tribes in which there are not one or more individuals to whom this power is attributed.

(6) The crescent toy whose airy flight.

Much as has been said and written about the eccentricities of the barracun or boomerang, I think I may be pardoned for alluding to an implement whose movements, when used either in peace or in war, are still a problem to European savans. The boomerang of war is not the same instrument whose buoyant and fantastic gyrations are the amusement of the young: each is made with great care, and the shaping of each regulates its future path when thrown by a dexterous hand.

(7) Not there the courtly wreathed smile.

Those who have contemptuously or cursorily observed the habits of the blacks can scarcely imagine how good-humoured they are in their hours of relaxation. Those who have really gained the confidence of a tribe will admit that the simple black in his native woods is at once the blithest and most un-ennuyable creature by whom a traveller can be accompanied.

(8) Who? who? Moyarra?

The perceptions of the natives are so keen, that this line implies no exaggeration : expert trackers know at a glance whose footprint they meet ; and this not only of friends, but of those whom they have seldom seen.

(9) By Mytah and the one she loved.

Maugre all the accounts, and I regret to say the true accounts, which have been given of the secondary position to which women are reduced in the social scale of savage nations, I have known instances which justify the statement of the text.

(10) His tale reserved till revered age.

The respect paid to age in Australian tribes is universal. In opposition to the theory of the case, however, this respect is not increased but rather diminished with the increasing age and infirmities of its object. Before a very old and infirm man dies he is frequently forgotten by the majority of his tribe ; but it must be remembered that in such case he has also long ceased to accompany his tribe in their wanderings. Nevertheless the courtesy of the Lacedemonians to the old man who required a seat at the Athenian games, would at any time find a counterpart in the wilds of Australia.

MOYARRA.

Canto H.

I.

'Neath the fragile mimosa dark Mytah was laid,
Where the care of her lover a soft couch had made,
The leaves in a delicate tracery woven,
Formed a bower by the sunlight that never was cloven;
Though confessing his ardor, they glowed in his beam,
Till the bright parroquet on the bough one might deem
An emerald blossom its branches that graced,
Were it not for the star-flower that Nature had placed,
Fit bloom mid such verdure to deck that bower
As the stars gild their blue dome in midnight hour.
'Twas there where hours of rapture, past,
Still o'er the spot their influence cast,
Where every herb that round her grew,
Flourished familiar to her view ;
Soothed by the thought of time gone by,
That Mytah wished in peace to die ;
There when her fast-receding breath
Might yield her to the tyrant Death
In solitude she wished to lie.
She knew 'twas fancy ; yet 'twas sweet
To think the earth she oft had trod,
And wandered o'er with careless feet,
Would shield her with its sheltering sod :
If feeling yet pursued that state, ⁽¹⁾
That gloom which all must penetrate,
'Twould soothe her lonely heart to know
The accustomed trees around that grow ;
The frail mimosa o'er her bending
Its feathery foliage of emerald green,
Seemed sensitive of the aid 'twas lending,
To shroud her closing scene ;
And 'twas a pleasing melancholy
To think, when soon that shrub must die ⁽²⁾
O'er her lone grave, 'twould seem to show
A sad companionship of woe :—

A little too, she strove to wean
 Moyarra from his desperate mien ;
 And when at times from her was wrung

A sigh she could not all conceal,
 She fain would say her tremor sprung

From thinking on the future weal
 Of him she left behind to grieve :
 (Alas ! what fraud can love deceive ?)

Close to her dying couch he clung,
 And o'er her wan form hung,
 While every pang her frame that rent
 Seemed as electrically sent

To prey upon his heart ;—
 As though of her he was a part,
 And the same life informed each frame ;
 Yet, as the moth still courts the flame,
 Though each approach brings on swift ruin,
 So now, his eager gaze renewing,
 Entranced Moyarra stood as though
 He loved such martyrdom of woe ;
 Feeding the canker in his breast
 Which knew nor hope nor rest ;—
 His soul was centered in his eye,
 Searching as if it would deny
 The too appalling certainty :—
 Turn ! turn ! Moyarra, from the sight,
 Thy glance is powerless as thy might.

Who hath not felt when Death was near
 And, all he loved, lay on the bier,
 That icy chill, that deadly calm,
 That calenture that gulls the sense,
 Shedding disease, but feigning balm,

Like the stillness ere the storm
 Bursts in its wild magnificence,

And the lightning springs from its form ?
 Canst thou tell where that lightning vanished ?
 Or where the spirit death hath banished ?

The sorcery of that hour confest,
 Weighs heavily on the gazer's breast,
 As the miasma's deadly dew
 O'er the languid frame their power infuse,
 Felt, though unseen, yet all-pervading
 The soul, which recks not the invading,

Till sunk beneath the treacherous thrall
 Flung o'er us by Death's gloomy pall,
 With stupid stare we view
 The clammy features' livid hue :
 Is that the idol of our heart ? away !—
 'Tis but its mockery in clay.

II.

The priests of Death be Disease and Fear,
 They attend his footsteps everywhere ;

While gentle Hope with dewy eyes
 And dizzy search would pierce the shade,
 Which like a mist doth all pervade

Around the temple of sacrifice.

Turn, frantic one ! that filmy veil
 Is but diaphanous of ill :

Fold after fold awhile withdrawn
 As night at the approach of dawn,

The fitting time the priests await
 Their impotent prey to immolate :—

'Tis done—the blow is sped—

Horror around is shed :—

Hope, exiled from the heart of man,
 Resigns her seat to Terror wan.

Out on thee, man ! thy pomp, thy show
 But swell the triumph of thy foe :—

Thy funeral obsequies nothing are,
 But the train to grace his conquering car :

Go to thy chamber ! wail the doom,
 That on thyself must one day come,
 Gods ! shall the Egyptian harlot, shame the globe,

Who nobly dared to die,
 Ere tricked in gorgeous robe

To grace a Cæsar's pageantry ?

III.

Yes ! weep, Moyarra ! not for thee

That face now sealed in dim repose,
 Shall wake to soothe thy misery,

And wean thee from oppressing woes :
 Wreathed in the cold embrace of death,

Thy bride from thy fond clasp is torn :

And yielding languidly her breath

She sinks forlorn ;

The teeth of pearl which did surround

The portals of that mine whence sprung

The spells by which thy soul was bound

When thy enchantress sung,

Arrayed in grim defiance, woo

No longer thy distempered view :

The ringlet curls which wont to stray

Adown those cheeks in wreathed play

No longer weave their witching maze,

Ensnaring thy rapt gaze :

But like the bruised tendril cling

Lifeless and withering :

Still in their last act merciful,

They shroud from thee those orbs now dull,

Whose twin-born beams with grateful ray,

Once cheered with added light thy day.

Yet gazest thou ? fond fool ! desist :

Like thee have thousand thousands striven

The spectre in his course to arrest,

Whose mystery is yet untriven :

And still, as to the rapid driven

The mighty river's ceaseless swell,

Of which no drop returns to tell

The thronging myriads *where* it fell

But plunges to the drear abyss—

Thus much alone revealed "*It is*"——

Or, as of mist the floating stream

Which wavers in the morning beam,

Anon its grossness laid aside,

Ascending in a radiant tide,

In purest particles alone

Soaring to attain th' Almighty throne :

Impelled by power which tempers all,

Such is our doom—we rise or fall ;

Yet are there hours—(who has not known ?)

When of our rigid task abhorrent

We fain would like the sullen torrent

Court the abyss before us thrown,

Rather than, on the wings of faith,

Our sordid part resigned to Death,

As the mist-wreath to flee from earth,

Freed from the taint that dimmed our birth.
 And why ? but that the past still flings
 Its gloom o'er all the future brings :
 Hope, meted by our pleasures past,
 Deserves not that her shrine should last ;—
 Fruition follows not her bloom :—
 Pining expectance droops her plume :—
 Whatever our pursuit, the part
 Achieved, sates not the longing heart,
 Restless immortal, destined here to roam,
 Striving mid finite things to build itself a home.

IV.

Woe ! woe ! since the primæval fall
 The dirge of bliss was ever sung
 In each reverberating tongue,
 The pregnant theme of grief for all :
 The ground is cursed for thy sake ;
 Thy bread in sorrow shalt thou take :
 Earth shall deny each pleasant blossom,
 Ill weeds and thorns deform her bosom :
 As, heretofore the dews of heaven
 Did gently on the plains descend,
 Henceforth, to thee the task be given,
 The rugged soil to tend :
 Toiling in sweat and agony of frame,
 Till dust return to dust from whence it came.

V.

Go, pluck from the blossoms the humming bird loves,
 The fairest that bloom amid Indian groves
 Of odours so rare, and hues so bright,
 That the senses faint with extreme delight :
 Aye ! add if you will of those that grace
 The gardens of art of every race :—
 Is it not sweet ?—then fling
 But one small branch of some loathed thing
 In the dank marsh whose stem is reared,
 (By man abhorred, by wild beasts feared)
 The vapours of whose pestilent breath
 Might antedate the sense of death :—
 And thou shalt find that drug hath power

To corrupt the sense of each precious flower,
 Mid all their odours to infuse
 The venom of its unctuous juice.
 Thus, of our earth, each varied joy
 That ceaseless curse hath power to cloy :
 Ever present—never weary :—
 Ready with its bodings dreary
 Our most prized bliss to infect
 Making it of none effect :—

Crushed by such consciousness of doom

Is there no hope that proudly flinging
 Like storm drops from the eagle's plume

The dross, which, to our spirits clinging,
 Obstructs our course, erect in conscious worth,
 We may arise—the demigods of earth ?

Alas ! as well the parent shape
 Might hope its shadow to escape
 Whose dull untiring mockery
 Still haunts it wheresoe'er it fly :

Yet, if revealed in one wide glow
 Light's glories from the heavens might flow,
 That shade o'erwhelmed in the bright maze
 Would vanish from our baffled gaze :
 E'en thus it soothes the soul to think

That, when disrobed of earthly stain,
 And clay to kindred clay shall sink,

The immortal spirit shall remain,
 A pure and perfect emanation

Of the great source from whence it came,
 Soaring, in heavenly aspiration,

As a lambent flame ;
 To mingle with the choir above

Who chaunt unending hymns of love ;

That there the soul may float in bliss
 Drinking in at every pore

Tides of celestial mysteries,
 Which fooled its keenest search before,

Filled with a joy for utterance too deep,

And holy love which doth its senses steep ;

While round in gleaming circles soar

The great, the good from every clime,

Gathered triumphant over time,

The murmurs of whose ebbless sea

Which bore them to eternity,
 Drowned in the music of the spheres
 No more attract their hopes, their fears ;
 As round and round in mazy flight
 They wheel, a galaxy of light.
 Celestial gales ambrosial fragrance bring,
 To harps celestial angel voices sing,
 The hallowed concord of whose magic fills
 The air with love, and on the sense instils
 A holy joy, a trembling transport, blended
 With fear that aught so sweet must soon be ended :
 But ever do those winds of heaven blow,
 Wafting that melody's richest, fullest flow,
 And ever doth that train celestial float
 In undulating union with each modulated note.
 It is a faith that well might win
 To virtue every child of sin,
 To think that from such blest communion
 With spirits made perfect, from that union
 His soul alike might perfect grow,
 Secure never again to know
 Or pain or sorrow, or that worst
 Of ills with which the heart is curst,
 A sense of thanklessness to Him
 Who framed our being here ; a dim
 Yearning for nothingness again
 To free us from the world's dull chain.

VI.

Around by dusky chiefs arrayed
 Now low in earth is Mytah laid,
 While o'er her early bier they hung,
 Her closing requiem thus they sung.

Thou art gone from us, Mytah! the salt tears of woe,
 Are our portion on earth, now thou art laid low ;
 One sun beheld thee with breath as light
 As the soft summer wind at morn that weaves
 Its melody mid the silvery leaves
 Of the pendulous acacia's boughs ;
 Another viewed thee far and faint,
 Sighing like the mournful plaint
 Of the river oak, when storms at night (3)

The gloomy mountain's echoes rouse :
And now thou art gone, loved Mytah.

Though the rites of our country forbid that thy name (*)
From the lips of thy kindred meet homage may claim,
Yet more deep than the glozing of language may tell,
Enshrined in our memories thy image shall dwell,
Though now thou art gone from us, Mytah.

Yes ! if aught our affection for thee may outgo,
It shall be of our hate the untameable glow
That burns to consume thy destroyer with rage,
Which the blood of its victim alone can assuage,
Because thou art gone, loved Mytah.

Destruction shall couch in his path, as the snake
Ere darting its venom, it springs from the brake,
Till the hand of thy foe from his vile carcase torn,
Thy shade shall appease and our triumph adorn,
Because thou art gone, loved Mytah.

May the earth which enwraps thee be clothed with
flowers,
The sweetest that bloom amid Spring's first showers ;
May the fresh dews of heaven its bosom bedew
With a fragrance for ever undying, yet new.
And rest thee in peace, loved Mytah.

VII.

"Nay, nay, Koreungat, say not so,
Thou sharest alike my weal, my woe ;
But vainly now I strive to shield
My heart from ills by time unhealed—
Still o'er my fancy, one by one,
Flit memories of joys bygone :—
From commune with myself I shrink,
Stung with the agony to think.
What marvel, if such lot be mine,
I seek not solace though 'twere thine.
By heaven, when clouds deform the sky
Each gloomy scene offends mine eye
Seeming to arrogate a share
In sorrow mine alone to bear :
Fond fool ! a brighter hour succeeds

And inly then my sick heart bleeds,
 Reflecting that from me alone
 The weight of anguish hath not flown :
 And I could crush each tender plant,
 In the sun's light which seems to pant
 With rapture of delight, while I
 Must watch its smiling apathy
 And recklessness of my distress.
 Till, like the hunted prey, whose foe
 Drinks its hot sobs with fell delight,
 No refuge from despair I know,
 No ray adorns my night.
 And not the least of pangs that wring
 Is, that while thus remembering
 The priceless debt to thy affection due,
 Though still to thee I am, as ever, true,
 A listless apathy of voice denies
 To shape the thought which gratitude supplies ;
 And I, repugnant to my crime, remain
 Enervate in its galling chain."

" Not to upbraid thee did I speak,
 Moyarra, but with hope to prove
 (Howe'er against despairing love
 I feel my language faint and weak)
 That this engrossing apathy
 In which you strive, and vainly strive,
 To bury thought of time gone by,
 Is but the spring which keeps alive
 The source which feeds your constant grief :
 Tis weak opposing ills to fly,
 Nor effort make their force to try :
 But wise to prove each avenue
 That hope can tint with prospects new.
 Look ! when the face of heaven is drear,
 And clouds obscure the light of day,
 The glad earth drinks each genial tear,
 The sun resumes his golden sway.
 What bird or beast by adverse fate
 Bereaved, finds not another mate ?
 One fountain of their joy is dried,
 Another pours its willing tide :
 No sorrows, that we see, endure,
 Shall ours alone reject a cure ?"

" But, Moya, tell me not again
Of gratitude won by my love:

Thou dost but grieve a heart which fain
In silence would its fondness prove :
Enough, I know were mine thy pain,
Thou wouldst have been the friend to me
That I have striven to be to thee.
But let us choose another theme,
Two days we now have traced this stream,
And though as deep its bed and wide
As when we first beheld its tide,
The mountains hang around our way,
Repelling the broad light of day,
Beetling as if their craggy sides
Frowned vengeance on the foaming tides
Which sap with ceaseless flow their feet :
Escape is none for those who meet
Within this chasm the foe they fear :
If rightly we have judged, we near
That awful precipice, whose crest
Groans with the weight of raging waves,
Which, plunging down with perilous haste,
Are shattered in its yawning caves ;
Where echo-waking cataracts come
Rushing, with hoary crests of foam."

VIII.

Truly the warrior spoke : for round
Each jutting precipice as they wound
Nearer and nearer swelled the sound,
While dark and gloomier o'er them grew
The shade the impending mountains threw :
Aloof the eagle swooped in air,
No little warbler flitted there,
Nor herb was there its weight to bear ;
Nought but the huge rock's columned side
Rearing aloft its crest of pride :—

Now louder grew the sound, and more
Magnificently rude the steeps

Re-echoing its terrible roar ;—
And lo ! revealed to sight, where leaps
Thy turbulent stream, Tiara, prone (5)

To the black gulf before it thrown :—
 The artillery of storms ! the flash
 Electric where thy waters dash ;
 The ambient clouds of mist that rise,
 Like spirits pure, freed from the ties
 Of earthly shocks and agonies :—
 Oh ! who shall hear and gaze upon
 Nor bend in spirit at the Almighty throne ?
 Temple of Nature ! where the eye,
 O'ergazing to satiety,

Reels on its liquid throne :
 Each mortal feeling quenched and dead,
 Save passionate ecstasy, thy dread

Magnificence to own :
 As if the heart in one fond gush
 Forth on the wings of sight did rush :
Here, high precipitously piled,
 Rude, beetling crags, and columns wild,
 Hung vast as threatening to o'erwhelm
 The intruders in their rugged realm :—
 And *there*, as doth the war-horse bound
 Rejoicing at the trumpet's sound,
 From rock to rock, with frenzied wrath,
 The chafed flood clove its hoary path,
 Exulting to have found a foe :
 Then, plunging in the gulf below,
 Foamed o'er the horrid rocks, and hurled,
 In wreaths fantastically curled,
 The scattered spray, which, floating there,
 Now hovered like a mist, in air,
 Now caught the lustre shed in streams
 By the fierce sun's meridian beams,
 And, weaving hues of every dye
 Blended with magic harmony,
 Glowed in celestial mockery.
 And, when, at times a heedless Zephyr
 The bow which trembled there did sever,
 Each broken arch would, wavering, woo
 Its gentle image to renew
 Their love : now in the sunbeams waving,
 Now in the ambient spray dew laving
 Their charms : then close in fond embrace,
 Leaving no tinge of parting's trace.

Oh ! ever thus should friends remain
 Aye linked in friendship's golden chain,
 Seizing the sunshine of bright hours,
 Plucking the rosy blossomed flowers,
 And if the world's unwelcome breath
 Taint with its blight one roseate wreath,
 Unheeded let it find a grave
 When not our skill its sweets can save ;
 If from our grasp the rose is torn
 Why should our bosoms nurse the thorn ?
 In amity's pure cup we'll find
 A balm to soothe the wounded mind :
 Wealth's votaries never can possess
 The joy we'll find in one caress ;
 Nor empire like the mutual union
 Of soul with soul in full communion.
 But here I cannot pause :—farewell
 Torrent ! whose thunder-mocking throne
 Of ever during power doth tell :
 Whose glories, silent I have gazed upon,
 Till from my mind earth's joys and sorrows fell.

IX.

From crag to crag the friends have gained
 With difficult labor the ascent,
 And now upon the summit stand,
 With eager gaze around them bent :
 Short time they tarried, ere, with spring
 As silent as the far bird's wing
 They bounded on, yet cautiously
 Leaving no trace to mark their way :
 On printless rocks alone they tread,
 Nor bend the humble flowret's head.
 Now sunk the sun, whose fiery rays,
 Revealed in all their energies,
 Paled the rich azure of the skies,
 Quenching their bloom in one wide-scorching blaze :
 Sullenly plunging to his rest,
 In lurid glare he robed the west,
 His red round orb glowing in rayless wrath
 Denounced the terrors of his morning path ;
 An ashen gloom as of a thunder cloud,

The horizon girt with dusky shroud ;
 Seemed it as if the fires of day
 On the parched earth but smouldering lay,
 Till lit by morn's electric ray
 Again in one bright gush all nature to display.
 The warriors paused, and having found
 A hollow by green mounds hemmed round,
 Prepared for food their simple fare :
 This quickly done, they quenched with care
 The glowing embers, and in low
 And earnest tones then communed
 How in the morning to proceed ;
 And how, themselves unseen, to know
 The present station of the foe.

X.

When fell the chill that tells of day (6)
 Darkling the warriors took their way,
 Leaving the river's rocky bed
 Silent and swift Moyarra led :
 Nor long they journeyed, ere a star
 Eclipsed in station high, while near
 Beamed brightly many a rival sphere,
 Served to their practised eyes to show
 Where frowned a neighbouring mountain's brow ;
 Nearing it with unslackened pace
 They bounded up its rocky base :
 With joy beheld that winter's chill
 Had bared the summit of the hill,
 Save where in dreary order stood
 Some hardier scions of the wood,
 Which having bloomed their little hour,
 Remained, types of their tyrant's power,
 Lifeless, yet in bleak array
 Memorials eloquent of decay.
 Now lo ! each moment brighter than the last,
 Proclaimed the coming glories of the East :
 Red and more red in deepening circles grew
 Rays which revealed the waking world to view
 (Like some fair vision of enchanted land,
 Where mysteries flee before the magic wand :)
 Till, leaping from his roseate couch, the sun

Rejoicing his bright course to run
Like his Great Author looked,—and all was light.

XI.

“Moyarra! fate befriends the bold,
Caution had found no surer hold
Than this, your ardour hath bequeathed ;”
From the near forest’s bosom wreathed
In welcome eddies many a spire
Revolvent of the latent fire :—
Beyond, far stretching plains were spread
Adorned but by their lawny green ;
Save, where at intervals, afar,
Rose a few eminences, bare,
Or crowned in mockery with a leafless wood
Like that on which the chieftains stood,

Firm and of fear unconscious, glancing
With all the ardour of the deer
Who knows his agile playmate near :

Hope, fixed, yet eager, was entrancing
With high and earnest thoughts the pair—
One passion ruled them both—to attain
Full vengeance for dark Mytah slain.
Soon as the sun with ardent ray
Asserting from high heaven the day
Glowed on the forests’ waving crests,
The warriors marked with throbbing breasts
Each movement of the unwary foe.
As bees that with the morning light
Disperse their troops in banded flight,
Winging at will their odorous way
From honeyed flower to flower ; so they
For various chase prepared, depart ;
Some to ascend with perilous art
The gaunt stem of the tree, whose womb
The squirrel makes his daily home ;
Some with the flying spear arrayed
To rove at will the forest glade,
And, ambushed, pierce the kangaroo,
Or the far-striding swift emu.

To thee, Muntookan, fate decreed
The former choice, when most thy need

Demands the safeguard of thy spear :
 Thou blind to fate ! might'st thou not fear,
 From thine own inroad's vile success,
 That fortune might thy rival bless ?
 Yes ! he e'en now, from that near height,
 Marks with a proud and fierce delight
 The course thy comrades with thee take ;
 Though tending to his recent track ;—
 Though of thy five companions, two
 Armed with the quivering javelin go.

XII.

Now, while with careless step and eye
 From tree to tree at ease thou'rt turning,
 Like some fond bird, that joyously
 Carols in the light of morning,
 Thine enemy notes thee ; so the snake,
 Extended latent in the brake,
 With glance fire-darting marks its prey
 Which flutters on the o'erhanging spray :
 His polished scales with livid lustre glow,
 As varied lights the mutable colours show,
 His lambent tongue, protruded, licks the air
 With ardour vibrating—he keeps his lair
 But till arrives the fitting time to spring
 And crush the victim with its futile wing.

“Koreungat ! now our track they near,
That seen, for us is no regress :
 My life I value not, nor fear
 But for our enterprise' success :—
 And see ! Muntookan swerves : do thou
 Retreat—I lay the spoiler low.”

He spoke, and heedless of his friend's appeal,
 Unerring as a beam of light departed :

His soul was but one passion strung to feel ;
 With eagerness of Hope his lips were parted :

Muntookan, startled, turned and shrunk to see
 The rapid death approaching : time was none

His swift assailant to repel or flee ;
 A fearful commune shook his breast alone,
 Whose craven judgment owned his race was run.

One effort yet is prompted by despair ;—
 The fatal axe which laid dark Mytah low,
 Now cleaves, but cleaves in vain, the parted air :—
 The uplifted club diverts the forceful blow,
 Then, whirled on high, descends, and crashing rends
 The cowering front which, ere its coming, bends ;
 The recreant falls, with blood and brains defiled,
 While o'er him hangs his foe unreconciled.
 Yet fell he not unmarked : his scattered friends
 To the fierce victor throng, with bearing wild,
 Who heeded not their coming : nor when flew
 The unerring javelins which his life-blood drew,
 Did once retract his gaze from his slain foe,
 But glared upon him when himself laid low.

XIII.

But thou, Koreungat ! who thy grief can tell
 When thus, so near to thee, thy comrade fell ?
 Not ineffectual was thy rage : thy spear
 A victim adds to grace the warrior's bier,
 Ere, rushing from the covert of the shade,
 Scorning the weapons in thy path arrayed,
 And dashing down one foe while others gave
 The wounds which grant thee no unwelcome grave ;
 To thy loved friend thou heldst unchecked thy flight.
 " Moyarra ! couldst thou doubt my truth ? " a light
 Like the faint lightning of a quiet night,
 Played o'er the victor's features fierce, and fired
 With momentary joy ere he expired.
 Then fled the vital spirit, free from care,
 The hope fulfilled which only made life dear.
 Not unattended did he sink in death,
 Koreungat, glad, resigned his equal breath,
 Worthy to wear the imperishable wreath
 That blooms and decks immortal Nisus' faith ;
 Would that thy praise were hymned by worthier tongue
 To raise thy name the deathless great among,
 Nor, as to harp of mine, thus humbly sung.
 Thy place was vacant in thy tribe ; who knew,
 When came not back the warriors to their view,
 That they had fallen by the stranger's hand,
 And there was mourning deep throughout the land.

XIV.

Thus far have I essayed to trace
 The lives, the loves of that dark race,
 (Chequered the tale and fraught with ill,
 For frail is bliss, life human still,)
 Heirs of the land where I must pine
 Reflecting that it is not mine.

My tale is done :—and I would fain
 Believe, though humble be my strain,
 A pitying tear may dim some tender eye,
 Some breast may heave a sympathetic sigh.
 But yet it matters not—to me
 It hath fulfilled kind ministry :—
 To purest fancies it hath won me ;
 From sorrowing thoughts which crowded on me ;
 Affection, homeward prone to veer

It hath compelled with magic wand,
 Beguiling the sad truth that here
 I am a stranger in the land.

Thou mild moon pouring down each night
 Thy trembling showers of silver light,
 I love thee, but I love thee more
 That thou revisitest England's shore ;
 That though *I* view not, *thou* dost shine
 On sacred haunts which once were mine,
 And still, by Memory's aid are shrined
 In holiest precincts of the mind.
 Aye! thou returnest to gaze thy fill
 On scenes by thee made holier still :—
 If shadows o'er the landscape fleet
 They render thy next smile more sweet :
 But fruitless is *my* fond endeavour
 To pierce the gloom which shrouds me ever ;
 My steps no more shall pace the grove
 Endeared by childhood's earliest love.
 Yet, when thou climbest thine azure throne
 Encircled by thy starry zone,
 Thou bringst remembrance of each night,
 I sported in thy gentle light ;
 Or conned the legendary rhyme,
 Beneath the oak long spared by time,
 Which reared its venerable head,

Relic of many a century fled ;
 Or, fearful, tempted the stern shade
 By the old mossgrown parapet made ;
 Doubting to leave thy light, which wont
 To quiver on the embattled front,
 A lustre seeming to impart,
 Hallowing the remains of art :
 As o'er those ruins thou couldst shed
 A recompense for glory fled ;
 A holier grandeur granting them,
 Than was their boast in day's broad gleam,
 So o'er the wreck of feeling crushed,
 Thy midnight hour, when all is hushed,
 A balm doth fling, which can awhile
 Of all its woes the heart beguile,
 Prompting, since joy may never last,
 A grateful memory of the past.
 Yes ! those were happy times, when youth
 Imagined and received for truth
 Its halcyon dreams ; in every dell
 A fairy spirit feigned to dwell ;
 And fancied in the wind's low sigh
 Tones of ærial minstrelsy.
 But why enumerate the thousand ties
 Subtly woven with love's sympathies,
 Which bound me to that hallowed spot,
 My home ?—enough I view it not :—
 Those ties are riven, and callous were the heart
 To view without a pang such joys depart,
 For which the world could soothe such sadly-pleasing
 smart.
 Shades of my fathers ! haunting yet
 Each object of my fond regret :
 The memory of whose fame is twined
 With tendril clasp around my meeting mind :
 Ye tutelar deities ! whose presiding love
 Sighed in the gale and whispered in the grove,
 Say can your spells pervade this distant clime,
 Alike victorious over space and time ?
 Once I conjured ye—" Be your airy forms
 Bright harbingers of fate in life's dark storms,
 Still hover o'er, your pinions weary never,
 Beckoning to realms where bliss endures for ever :"

Vain invocation ! rests with me alone
A dim remembrance of fair visions flown ;
A lonely sense I yearn to lose ;—the ghost
Lingering, memorial sad, of pleasure lost ;
Yet, though the boon ye not accord to me,
Oh ! in the councils of my father land
Instil the wisdom which may keep it free,
Great, glorious, wonder of the nations : so shall be
Your benison wafted o'er the circling sea
To hearts, which, faithful still, revere your sacred band.

1841.

THE END.

NOTES TO CANTO II.



(1) If feeling still pursued that state.

As I have before mentioned, the natives have no defined belief in a future state: gradual degradation has worn away the knowledge of a Deity which is implied and even represented at their ceremonies of initiation. Their ideas of evil spirits are not consistent in different tribes—their religious ceremonies are: their evil spirits are not therefore presided over by an Ahri-man, but are the mere fruit of ignorance and fear; and are variously imagined according to some local events for which the tribes can assign no cause. Fear of a human enemy always overcomes the dread of spirits; and a native, when pursued, will readily travel where under ordinary circumstances he would not venture alone, or without a torch; as, for instance, at night near dense bushes or jungles. If it should appear to any one that in this part of my tale I might have introduced allusions to the sublime faith and hope which in the case of a Christian deprive death of its sting, and the grave of its victory, I say that I dared not to attempt, what so few have succeeded in. An unsuccessful attempt would probably be classed as a manifest impiety; and I would rather abstain from treading, than venture where a false step would convict me of rushing in where angels fear to tread.

(2) To think when soon that shrub must die.

The mimosa is shortlived, and the redundant verdure of a few seasons is but the sign that many more will not view it in bloom.

(3) Of the river oak when storms at night
The gloomy mountain echoes rouse.

Those who have heard the solemn sighing sound produced by the wind in the swamp oak tree, will appreciate the mournful feeling which, in some circumstances, arises in the mind, when so melancholy a sound appears an echo to the sense.

(4) Though the rites of our country forbid that thy name.

The natives cautiously abstain from naming their deceased relatives or friends, and are evidently aggrieved if they hear from strangers the names of deceased members of their tribe.

(5) Thy turbulent stream, Tiara, prone
To the black gulf before it thrown :—

The chasms which are found on the eastern side of the mountain range which divides the waters of the M'Leay and the Clarence from the western streams which flow into the basin of the Murray, and which are known amongst the New England residents as "the falls," demand a better pen than mine to describe their magnificent features. I have seen them when the roar of the torrents which fall into them has prevented the voice from being heard, and also when the beds of those torrents have been parched by drought—and, strange as it may appear, I have felt in each case, that the rush and roar of the water is by no means the sublimest characteristic of the scene. The wildness and vastness of the chasm are the absorbing considerations to the beholder.

(6) When fell the chill that tells of day,
Darkling the warriors took their way.

The sudden chill which weighs upon the earth a little before dawn is well known to all who have spent night after night in the unhoused bush. The expedition of the friends into an enemy's country may appear Quixotic, but is not unparalleled even within my own knowledge of the habits of the natives. I have known three of them make an expedition, lasting several weeks, during which they not only made an inroad in a hostile tribe, but returned successfully home after killing more than three of their enemies.

ERRATUM.

Page 33, line 16, for, **As night at the approach of dawn,**
read, **As night glooms at the approach of dawn,**

HARVARD

I promise to return the following-named F
understood that a failure to return the book will subject

